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Comments: Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

Thank you for taking the next steps to advance President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies. Time is running short: the climate and biodiversity crises are growing exponentially worse and it is critical that the President's directive to provide lasting protections for these trees be fulfilled.

For the purpose of protecting these climate-critical forests from logging, 'mature' should be defined as trees over 80 years old. Using that definition as a benchmark would protect our most climate and carbon-critical forests, and only in rare and exceptional circumstances should logging of these elders be allowed. Protecting mature forests and trees today will provide the foundation to recover old-growth ecosystems that have largely been lost to logging across the landscape. These protections must be made through binding regulations that will endure in future administrations, much as the Clinton-era Roadless Rule has done. It is critical for federal agencies to initiate a rule-making process as soon as possible.